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Book Notices.

PATTON'S AHMED IBN HANBAL AND THE MIHNA.¹

It may be doubted whether, in the absence of those absolutely original and first-hand documents which now form the basis of scientific history and which so often completely upset the accounts of earlier easy-going historians, it will ever be possible to put the history of the Muslim races on a firm foundation. But it is quite certain that that will never be accomplished so long as we are content, as were to so great an extent both Weil and Flügel, to take two or three Arabic chroniclers and render their accounts into a connected and easy-flowing narrative. As a consequence of this, those who have busied themselves at all with the history of the Muslim East have long recognized that the only way to do successful work in it is to attack it piecemeal, to cut out sections here and there, and to investigate them narrowly and thoroughly. This book forms a welcome addition to the over-small number of these special studies. The epoch chosen by Dr. Patton for examination is that of the Mu'tazilite Miḥna, a term which he renders inquisition, but which might be better explained as test, seeing it was really a kind of Test Act, passed by the government and imposed upon all coming in contact with it. There is furnished here a curious comment upon the position much held nowadays that Islām never persecutes. The rationalist Khalifa al-Ma'mūn of this Miḥna was only equaled in intolerance by the orthodox Khalifa al-Qāhir of the second Miḥna, which followed about one hundred years later. It is true that the persecution was not carried on by the Muslim church for the reason that there is no Muslim church as a separate thing from the state. Al-Ma'mūn could have said not only *L'État c'est moi*, but also *L'Eglise c'est moi*.

This Miḥna Dr. Patton treats as an incident in the life of the great Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal. He has used the printed texts bearing upon his subject, aṭ-Ṭabarī, Abū-l-Maḥāsin, Ibn Khallikān, and the rest, and also three MS. sources in the library of the University of Leyden. These are a part of the *Ḥilya al-Awliyā* of Abū Nu'aym Aḥmad b. 'Abd Allāh al-Ispahānī, the *Ṭabaqāt ash-Shāfi'īya* of Ibn as-Subkī, and the biography of Ibn Ḥanbal by al-Maqrīzī. From these he gives very full quotations and thus increases markedly the value of his work. For one of the principal criticisms which I have to make is that he has not entered into

¹ AHMED IBN HANBAL AND THE MIHNA. A biography of the Imām, including an account of the Mohammedan Inquisition, called the Miḥna, 218-234 A. H., by Walter M. Patton, B.D. Ph.D., Professor in the Wesleyan Theological College, Montreal, Canada. Leide: Librairie et Imprimerie ci-devant E. J. Brill, 1897. 208 pp. M. 6.50 net.

sufficient detail in the use of his sources. Again and again interesting little points are left in Arabic and not used as they might have been, if only to give point and color to his narrative. For instance, on p. 91, when Ibn Ḥanbal is brought before al-Mu'tasim for examination, the messenger sent for him remarks that *his* theology extends to knowing that there is no God but Allāh, that Muḥammad is the apostle of God, and that the Khalifa is of the family of the Prophet. Dr. Patton does not tell us that he said this in Persian, a fact which throws a good deal of light upon his theological ignorance. Again, on p. 102, Aḥmad, discussing the law of foot-washing, was face to face with no abstract idea of death, but with two actual beheaded corpses. Further, on p. 106, the *tantaḥīlulu* of the Arabic text on p. 97 is hardly sufficiently brought out. His opponent says to him: "I think you are embracing *Ḥadīth* as your religion," *i. e.*, instead of the Qur'an. Such details are not generally of any special importance, but their omission goes to make the narrative very bald and insipid. Yet they may, as in the case of the Persian remark above, be of distinct importance, and therefore the full quotations given from the MSS. are to be thankfully received.

Of slight errors and inadequacies of treatment I have marked several. On p. 111 *teeth* is hardly an adequate rendering for the *nabāni*, *tusks* or *dog-teeth* of the whipping-post. On p. 25 it should have been noted that the ten companions in a special class are the *al-'ashara al-mubashshara*, the ten who were specifically promised paradise by the Prophet in a tradition which is probably a later eirenicon. On p. 139 Dr. Patton very curiously regards as authentic the tradition from Ja'far b. Muḥammad with regard to the command (*al-amr*): "It is neither a creator nor a created thing." The tradition evidently belongs to a much more advanced stage of theological speculation. On p. 192 Ibn Ḥanbal did not need to be an ascetic to believe in dreams. All Muslims did and do, and Ibn Khallikān has left some very remarkable accounts of dreams which he had. On p. 63 the rendering of *zindīq* as *atheist* is inadequate. A *zindīq* is rather one who secretly denies his religion, a hypocrite (see Goldziher, *Studien*, II., p. 216). The note on p. 76 is incorrect, or at least misleading. What the quotations in Goldziher prove is the death penalty for unbelief (*kufṛ*), not for heresy. The distinction may be illustrated thus: Al-Ghazzālī accused the Aristotelian philosophers of *kufṛ* on three counts only: affirmation of the eternal preëxistence of the world, denial of the resurrection of the body, and denial that God knows particulars (asserting that He only knows universals); but it was only heresy (*bid'a*) when they denied the attributes of God and held that He knew by His essence. Thus only on the first three counts would it have been legal to inflict the death penalty on them. On p. 111 Dr. Patton has completely misunderstood why Ibn Ḥanbal's guards treated him after the flogging with the apparent roughness described in the Arabic of p. 99. It was not a continuance of their "abuse," nor were they "torturers." The text reads: "We turned thee over upon thy face and threw a *bārīya* [a woven mat of reeds, see Lane *sub* √ *būr*] on thy

back and trampled on thee." This seems to have been the regular treatment after flogging, and the object was to facilitate the formation of new flesh on the back. See a similar account of the beating of al-Faḍl b. Yaḥyā al-Barmakī in Ibn Khallikān, Vol. II., p. 465, of de Slane's translation. Further, I do not think it is quite correct to say, as Dr. Patton does on p. 141, that Ibn Ḥanbal interpreted the provision that prayers might be shortened on journeys as positive and not merely permissive. Rather he took up the position commonly held that when God has relaxed an ordinance as an easement to men, it is their duty to avail themselves of His kindness. On p. 145 his attitude towards ruling powers in avoiding contact with them or relationship to them should have been dealt with more fully and explained. Had he really the Shi'ite tendencies so often ascribed to him, or did he believe that all government was worldly? The attitude of theologians towards the Umayyads, quoted in illustration, was on a different basis.

But in spite of these defects, which wider reading and a deeper insight into Islām will obviate, Dr. Patton's work is to be warmly welcomed as a solid contribution to our knowledge of the time. One of the most important things in the book is the light thrown on the character of al-Ma'mūn. It is strange to find the consistent patron of philosophy and science appearing as a persecutor. But his letters given here from aṭ-Ṭabarī show the intellectual intolerance and arrogance that dictated his attitude. He knew, *he*, the enlightened and learned man, and that must suffice; let his people obey. The character of al-Mutawakkil is also affected by Dr. Patton's work, but not to the same degree.

Finally, it is to be hoped that Dr. Patton will continue in this field which he has chosen and in which he has made so good a beginning. Similar lives of ash-Shāfi'ī, of Abū Ḥanifa, and of Mālik b. Anas are much needed, and only by such study of epochs and men can we come to a view of the whole.

DUNCAN B. MACDONALD.

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THE HEBREW FRAGMENT OF SIRACH.¹

During a ten-days' trip to England, about the last of March 1897, Professor Smend enjoyed unusual opportunities for examining the new fragment of Sirach. By the courtesies of the Clarendon Press, of Dr. Schechter, of Mrs. Lewis, and of Mrs. Gibson, he was enabled to make a careful study and presentation of the text. In the pages before us the

¹ DAS HEBRÄISCHE FRAGMENT DER WEISHEIT DES JESUS SIRACH. Herausgegeben von Rudolph Smend. Berlin: *Weidmannsche Buchhandlung*, 1897. [From *Abhandlungen der königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen*. Philologisch-historische Klasse. Neue Folge, Band II., Nr. 2.] Paper. 34 + 1 pp.; 4to. M. 3.50.

DAS NEU GEFUNDENE HEBRÄISCHE STÜCK DES SIRACH. Der Glossator des griechischen Sirach und seine Stellung in der Geschichte der jüdischen Theologie. Von D. A. Schlatter, Professor in Berlin [= Beiträge zur Förderung christlicher Theologie. Herausgegeben von A. Schlatter und H. Cremer. I. Jahrgang, Heft 5 u. 6]. Gütersloh: *Bertelsmann*, 1897. Paper. 191 pp.; 8vo.